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## Faculty, Students, and Alumni Connect at Minnebar 8

*Summary: Students and alumni joined Nic McPhee, professor of computer science, at the 8th Annual Minnebar Technology Conference on Saturday, April 6.*

(May 22, 2013)-Nic McPhee, professor of computer science, attended the 8th Annual Minnebar Technology Conference on Saturday, April 6, with computer science students Andrew Latterner '14, Jordan, Maxwell Marti '15, Saint Paul, and Savannah Farm '16. Hosted at Best Buy headquarters in Richfield, the event caters to a diverse array of people in technology fields and businesses.

Minnebar is billed as an “un-conference,” as there is no pre-determined theme. Participants propose topics they would like to present or discuss, and attendees determine the session offerings by attending. For this year’s event, all of the 1,000 free registration tickets were gone within an hour of being made available, which is fairly typical for Minnebar, according to McPhee. He adds that, due to the fluidity of topics and the demand for attendance, the conference attracts a diversity of knowledge not often seen at other conferences.

“[Minnebar] is a diverse event,” says McPhee. “There aren’t just software developers: it’s for politicians, headhunters, and anyone in the technology world.”

Topics for the conference included management of technology start-ups, the usefulness of ‘gamifying’ classrooms (adding reward systems to homework to motivate student progress), and civic hacking, which aims to make massive amounts of public data searchable. According to Latterner, it was an “eye-opening experience for people going into the computing industry.”

He and his fellow Morris participants agreed they would like to attend another Minnebar event.

“One of the sad parts I discovered is that not a lot of people [from the Computer Science Discipline] wanted to go,” says Farm. Not for lack of interest, she argues, but the fact that “they may not know just how fun it is and how great it is to be able to be a part of something like that.”

Computer science alumni Dan Flies '04 and Matt Hardy '01 arranged for the Morris group to attend Minnebar. They worked with conference organizers to secure their tickets after the original 1,000 were gone, as the Minnebar hopes to increase student attendance. Flies and Hardy are co-founders of the tech startup [Kidblog](#), which involves K-12 children in online writing.

Pictured left to right: Andrew Latterner '14, Maxwell Marti '15, Nic McPhee, and Savannah Farm '16  
Photos provided by McPhee

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